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they only eat pumpkin leaves', i.e. where game is short and the people have to rely on vegetable relishes. They refer to a visit to a village on a big river as, 'He has gone to eat fish with So-and-So.' The fortunes of each district are discussed year by year and villages described as 'with hunger' (*pa nsala*) or the converse, 'with beer' (*pa bwalua*), i.e. with so much grain that they can make beer frequently. The seasonal changes in food, and the stages in its production, give their names to the periods of the year. While a definite calendar of moons exists (cf. Chap. XVIII) the Bemba more often time events as having taken place 'in the hunger months', i.e. the last months of the rains when the millet supply is low; or 'when we were eating mushrooms', 'when the *mupundu* fruit was ripe', and 'when we were reaping, sowing', &c., and the ages of babies are usually reckoned by dating their births in this manner.

The position of the Bemba traveller, dependent as he is on the hazards of hospitality, provides a further element of uncertainty. The correct greeting to one who has returned from a journey is *Mwalyeni bwino*, 'Have you eaten well?' To which the courteous reply is *Kulila mulelya*, 'Provided you have eaten well yourself', or *E Mukwai kufipwishya*, 'Yes, sir, I eat everything up completely', or else *Fia kwa cilime bafipwa kano wa kulapo yanda*, 'It would have been impossible to finish up all the crops unless you had built a house alongside', i.e. it was so plentiful. There is a regular form of magic used to ensure a guest's arrival before a meal has been finished and not after. A knot tied in the grass with the right formula repeated will secure this result, and I found my staff even performed this rite on my own behalf if at all doubtful as to my reception on a visit to unknown English hosts.

Besides this direct interest in the food he is going to eat in the day, or the beer he may have the luck to come in time for, the secondary values acquired by food give it an added emotional interest to the Bemba. It must be remembered that there is no other way of accumulating wealth in this area except by acquiring sufficient food to feed many followers. The giving or receipt of food is a part of most economic transactions, and may come to represent a number of human relationships whether between different kinsmen or between subject and chief. For this reason the whole question of handling or dividing food acquires tremendous emotional significance for the native, and discussions of personalities or legal relationships tend to be ultimately expressed in this

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423 themselves if really hungry, provided they leave the cut stalks and sheaves of the maize openly in the field so that the owner may see that a kinsman has 'borrowed' food (*kuashima*), not a mere thief. Gourds or pumpkins may only be picked with the owner's permission. Sweet potatoes and cassava roots, neither reckoned as a staple food, nor regarded as essential substitutes during the hunger season, seem to be dug up much more freely by a man's relatives. Children, in particular, grub up roots from the garden of any near relative on either side of the family, saying indignantly if questioned, 'No, we are not stealing (*tatuleiba*). This is our place here (*tuli kumiesu*).'

681 The theft of millet from gardens does not seem to be a common offence. The grain has got to be pounded before it is eaten, and
685 this is inconvenient for a casual thief. He prefers to take maize cobs, gourds, or pumpkins, which can be quickly cooked and eaten as a snack, and which ripen in the season when food is short. The penalties for theft vary with the season of the year. If a man steals in the hunger months and comes and explains his predicament his theft is apparently treated lightly, and he is merely asked by the owner to return goods to the value of what he has eaten.[1] But a thief caught red-handed trying to conceal his crime can expect no mercy. In the old days, I was told, he was liable to be speared on the spot, but that if this summary justice was not exacted, he would in any case have to repay the owner far more than the worth of the stolen food, 'perhaps four times as much, because he had made the heart of the gardener hot'.[2] The same is true to-day. In 1930, near Chinsali, a thief suspected of stealing maize cobs over some weeks was finally caught in the act. He paid the owner 12*s.* damages for the theft of two maize cobs on the first occasion, and 7*s.* 6*d.* for one on the second without the case ever coming into court.[3] Another method of punishing a culprit, especially one
681 who has few material possessions with which to compensate for
685 his theft, is to lay a conditional curse on some property of his,
● 789 i.e. his own garden or granary. This is known as *ukusaka*. In this case the injured party places branches across the entrance to the thief's garden or granary and places a charm on them. He informs

[1] *Vide* rights of a hungry subject to take food from the chief's garden.

[2] Cf. the case of the owner who does not mind his relatives taking his mealies if they do not insult him by concealing the theft.

[3] The maize cobs would be sold at about 3*d.* for a basket of 6 or 8.

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the headman and chief what he has done, and will not consent to remove the curse until he has been fully compensated.[1]

During the harvest season rights of ownership are less strictly exacted, since food itself is plentiful. As one informant said, 'To steal heads of maize is theft because they ripen in the hunger months; to steal heads of Kaffir corn is not theft,' i.e. because there is food at that time.[2]

To protect their distant gardens from theft the Bemba resort to supernatural means only. Protective magic is used, but only to a small extent.[3] It is interesting to find that the Bisa, whose staple crop is cassava, which is readily stolen as it remains in the ground all the year round, regularly place in their gardens charms designed to afflict a possible thief with different types of illness. This custom, known as *ukuamba*, seemed to be universally practised on Cilubi Island. A man leaving home for a period would plant in a prominent place a stake with magic attached to it, and so strong was the belief in its powers that the owner himself was afraid to dig up the cassava on his return without first removing the charm. Among the Bemba, where the staple crop is less frequently stolen, such forms of protective magic seem to be, comparatively speaking, rare. Charms to be burned in a field to produce various diseases such as elephantiasis in garden thieves were described to me, but I never heard frequently of their use. In such cases I was told the culprit could only hope to recover if he confessed his guilt. A far more common practice is the use of a special form of curse, *ukulapishya*, uttered after a theft has been committed, not before. This is done when gourds or pumpkins are disappearing from a garden and the thief is unknown. I have heard such curses uttered constantly during the hunger months, when the pilfering of vegetables is quite frequent, and a woman has no means of guarding them. The usual procedure followed was to announce in a loud shout in the quiet of an evening some such statement as, 'All you people, listen! One of my pumpkins went yesterday and another the day before. Now I am angry. I am really going to curse. To-morrow I am going to curse. Really and truly I am.' On several such

[1] I never came across an actual case in which this was done and think the practice is growing rarer. Cf. also the use of protective magic in gardens.

[2] *Kukontole mise ya nyanje bupupu pantu shilepya pa nsala: kukontole mise ya masaka te bupupu.*

[3] Cf. p. 356.

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occasions whispered conversations followed and the theft, often the heedless act of a child, was confessed next day. Once the headman himself came to beg the angry woman not to proceed with her threat and himself brought compensation 'so that no one might die in the village'. Many such curses in fact remain as threats and form effective sanctions in that way. When actually uttered they are thought to invoke supernatural powers to punish the culprit. Bemba curse by the High God, Lesa, who is usually believed to strike guilty people with thunderbolts, or they curse by the dead chiefs of the land (*mfumu shye calo*).[1] Such a curse is thought to work automatically and can only be removed when the culprit has confessed and begged for mercy. The curser then gives beads to the spirits and prays, saying, 'You, my chiefs, we didn't understand everything. We beg mercy now. We cursed those children. We did not know. Now have mercy and do not kill them.'[2] The fear of the owner's curse appears to me to act even at the present day as a very efficient means of preventing petty garden thefts during the hunger months.

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Thus individual ownership of field crops is very clearly defined among the Bemba. It is interesting to note that bush foods are also subject to individual ownership rules whenever it is possible to exert them. Rights over meat and fish are described fully in Chap. XIII, but it is worth mentioning that natives mark as their own trees covered with caterpillar grubs so that they may come and gather them when they have grown sufficiently large and succulent for their taste. The man who first discovers a swarm of wild bees will also mark the tree in which they have settled for his own.

Rights over Granaries.

Control over the contents of the Bemba granary are governed by more complex rules. Roughly speaking, the labour given to the production of the crop gives a man the ultimate right of disposal, but this is subject to the superior claims of certain older relatives and ultimately to that of the chief himself. That is to say, the

[1] For instance, 'A man has stolen my food. I give him to the chief. I give him to Ba Matipa (the tutelary deity of the neighbourhood). Let him (Ba Matipa) come and eat that man' (*Umuntu ulengibila filyo. Nakupe mfumu. Nakupe Ba Matipa. Bese bakulye*). Kasakatula village, near Shiwa Ndandu, 1931.

[2] (*Mwe shyamfumu shyonse. Tatuishibe fyonse. Twapâpâta nomba. Twalipishya bana balya. Tatuishibe. Nomba twapapata. Mwilabepaya.*)

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804 discouragement, i.e. when some fowls began to eat the beans. Repeated questioning failed to produce a gardener who was prepared to estimate the size of his garden or of the crop, though many would say 'I shall want a big granary for that millet' or 'It will fill half a granary'. But a comparison in any one year of size of crop to size of granary and to number of eaters, I never heard made.

It must be realized too that the incentive to measure food-supplies depends largely on whether it is intended that they should be exchanged, or used as a means of assessing wealth, status, or some other attribute valued in the particular society. For instance in some parts of both West and East Africa marketing, either by direct barter or with the use of a money currency, is highly developed; and here, as we should expect, the weights and quantities of different foodstuffs are most accurately measured. Again, in parts of Melanesia, where kudos is associated with the reciprocal exchange of valuables and baskets of food, the computation of these objects is naturally made with a great deal of emotional intensity. The same can be said of the Indians of North-Western America, who reckon status by the credit a man obtains by offering or destroying in public quantities of blankets and copper plates in the elaborate system Potlache exchange. Among the Bemba, however, there is no such reason why the exact size of a man's harvest should be ascertained, and no fixed values even in money by which a man's income can be assessed.

Magic and Food Calculations.

789 Apart from this lack of desire to measure their assets it is important to notice that the Bemba, probably as a reflection of the general uncertainty of their budgeting system, are definitely convinced that identical quantities of food do not always last the same length of time or satisfy the same number of eaters. On the contrary they believe that its power both to last till the end of the season, and to satisfy the hunger of the eater, depend upon special magic properties which can be given to it by human beings, if they perform the necessary rites. Even quite educated natives support this view. How is it, they say, that one woman fills her granary at harvest and finds that it is empty long before the year is done, while another reaps the same amount but the food lasts in her *ubutala* until the

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new grain is ripe? Why does one woman serve out porridge so that every one gets up quickly feeling satisfied, while the guests of another eat and still feel empty? The answer is magic (*ubwanga*). Food, and millet in particular, is specially subject to witchcraft (*ubuloshi*). Wizards stick horns in their granaries to attract the grain of other men. They also send out mysterious black birds (*mawa*) at night to steal the food of neighbours and convey it to their own granaries. How does this happen? The Bemba answers that he does not know, but that it is a well-known fact that wizards have more food than other men. A more subtle form of sorcery takes the goodness out of the millet while it is still growing in the gardens, so that when it is reaped and eaten it has no power to satisfy a hungry man. To protect himself against these dangers counter-magic is the gardener's only hope, and even without definitely suspecting witchcraft, all the Bemba I questioned told me that food could not be expected to last unless some magic of durability had been performed—a magic rite that would keep the granary full (*ukuisula pe na pe*) and would act upon the food so that one little eating pot would satisfy a family instead of two, and 'the little bit of porridge give strength to the heart' (*akabwali kalekosho mutima*).

All these results are produced by the Bemba charm *icibyalilo*, still almost universally used to-day. The form of the charm varies from family to family although there are certain common elements, such as the doctoring of the grain with medicine smoked through it (*ukufutikila*) or by sprinkling (*ukusansa*), the mixing of the old harvest with the new to maintain continuity, and some rite of sympathetic magic by which people are made to feel full with the new grain in order that this property of satisfaction may be conferred on the rest of the crop. All sorts of intermediate forms exist, and the fact that Christian women sometimes sign themselves with the cross before reaping to make the food last shows how strong is this belief that nothing but supernatural aid can carry a woman safely through the hazards of Bemba catering.

The full *icibyalilo* rites are complex and take place in three stages. At sowing, the medicinal herb (*umuti*), sometimes mixed with an activating principle like scrap iron or a piece of rubber, is mixed with the seeds that are sown and sometimes a small portion is buried in the centre of the field or little fire-stands built there for the cooking of the new grain at the approaching harvest. At

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789 243 reaping, a little knot of millet is usually tied in the centre of the garden and a small fire lit underneath upon which a potsherd full of water is set to heat. Medicine is thrown on top when the steam begins to rise. It is believed that this medicated steam travels right through the field (*ukufutikila*). After this a little paste made of the old year's flour is dabbed here and there on the new heads of grain (*ukusansa*). In some families the first grain is carried back to the village in a special basket and the empty granary must be smoked with the same medicine before it is filled. It is common, too, for a little porridge made with old and new flour mixed to be given to two small boys to eat ('Because the stomachs of small children get quickly filled'). The remains of the porridge added to a basket of new grain is then tipped into the granary by one of the little boys who shouts, 'You granary fill up now!' (*We butala uisule!*).

789 In conclusion, the Bemba consider it more or less normal for food to be scarce, and both their agricultural system and methods of distribution make it impossible entirely to prevent such a happening. Traditional magic belief teaches that only by supernatural means can the dangers of a shortage be avoided. This firm conviction combined with the temperamental optimism of the Bemba and their lack of interest in hard agricultural work makes them believe that somehow something will happen. *Butala mumina ua lusato.* 'A granary is like the oesophagus of the python', i.e. you think it looks very small, but really it can enlarge to hold a great deal.

The people's system of measurement and their material equipment makes it difficult for them to estimate their supplies exactly, and in any case it does not pay them to have much more food than their relatives stored in their granaries. All these reasons account for their failure to achieve that attitude of mind which the European describes as 'foresight' or 'thrift'.

Material Possessions of the Bemba.

556 The problem of the annual shortage of the Bemba must now be considered from the general economic point of view as distinct from that of the individual housekeeper. What incentives have the Bemba as a whole to accumulate sufficient surplus to provide them with a margin of safety in case of calamity? It is clear that there is not sufficient food grown in the country, but is

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This vivid interest in the forest is reflected in magic

824 is well known that in most Bantu languages the word for tree (*umuti*, or its equivalent form) is used for medicine or charm. It is not only that Africans have a wide knowledge of the curative properties of the roots, leaves and bark of different trees, but that they believe them to possess magical properties against ill health, witchcraft, or evil spirits. I know no Bemba charm which does not contain the roots, bark, or leaves of at least two different trees.

824 To his knowledge of the species of trees and plants in the neighbourhood, the native allies a keen interest in their whereabouts. As he walks through the bush he registers almost unconsciously the presence or absence of certain trees in a way that constantly surprises the European. Such memories seem indelibly impressed on the Bemba because of their practical importance. Driving 400 miles from Broken Hill to Kasama, the centre of the district, there is nothing to be seen all day but a flat expanse of trees, mostly deciduous, with hard shiny leaves, and dusty shrubs and grasses block the view from the road. Europeans tend to find this bush country unbearably monotonous, but the African apparently sees quite a different scene. To him such a route would be described in terms of trees. Every turn in a fifteen-mile walk would be defined in such phrases as, 'Where that big *mupundu* grew', or 'Where that *umusuku* stood with the broken branch', and so forth, the whole punctuated with cries of enthusiasm: 'That was a fine tree!' These people's thoughts and interests are in fact entirely concentrated on objects that the average white man simply does not see.

222 Besides their need for wood the Bemba rely on the bush for the animals and birds, caterpillars, insects, and the plants which are indispensable for their diet, and they are constantly on the look-out for such objects as they walk. Both men and women have the power of continuing an animated conversation without ever missing a single honey-bee nest or a distant mushroom, and remembering how to locate such a find a second time. I once stumbled on a bush path, turning suddenly to look at a strip of sunset against a black cloud. The native who helped me up said sympathetically, looking at the bough which he believed had riveted my attention, 'Yes, I saw that swarm of caterpillars too, but the grubs are not big enough to eat yet. I shall tell my wife to fetch them later on. I shall say, "Look for the *umutondo* tree to the east of where the path forks".' His observations had been made in a flash during our

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to protect the millet gardens. The same principle is followed in small snares such as the *namwilindi*, used to catch moles and wild cats round the neck, or for birds. These snares are sometimes baited. Running nooses (*ifiselela*) are set in apertures made in barricades of branches. A log is then hung by a fine bark strand above the only opening in the barrier and attached to a delicate trigger on the ground. A wild pig that touches the latter as it brushes through the aperture releases the rope so that the log falls on to its head. Guinea-fowl are also caught in the same way. Stone traps (*ifiliba*) are used for tiny animals such as rats and moles, a big round stone being balanced precariously by a stick which the slightest touch is sufficient to dislodge. Small wild birds like parrots are caught by small boys who put lime on twigs on which a running noose has been set.[1] The Bemba also used to dig large staked pits (*amacinga*, sing. *ubucinga*), about eight feet deep, into which big game sometimes fell, but are now forbidden by the Government to do so on the grounds that a child might fall into such a hole and be killed. All trapping and snaring is carried out sporadically by the Bemba, and it is difficult to believe that this method produces much game. During three years' residence, admittedly not in particularly good game country, I never saw a buck caught in a trap, though I have occasionally been brought snared guinea-fowl. As far as I know there are no religious or magic rites associated with the setting of traps.

(*c*) *Duiker whistle* (*ichinyenye*). Hunters after duiker (*mpombo*) use a small duiker horn with a paper-like membrane, taken from a certain spider's nest, over the aperture. The hunter blows into the horn and produces a short, shrill scream which is thought to imitate the duiker's call. The animal is said to answer the whistle, and the instrument is universally believed in. Its negative results in my presence were always said to be due to the hostile influence of the wrong sex. These horns are doctored by successful hunters, who sell the medicine necessary for their use, and the new owner must address the whistle: 'I got you from X, a famous hunter, by purchase or as a gift (i.e. I did not steal you), so do your duty accordingly. I have rolled on the ground before the spirits, and before Lesa, begging him to give me of his cattle.'[2] The *icinyenye* is therefore definitely a magic whistle.

[1] T. L. Fox-Pitt writes: Pied wag-tails must be released, as they bring bad luck to the village.

[2] I am indebted to the Rev. R. Macminn for this text.

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105 No cash crop had been introduced in the area at the time I studied it. In order to get a cash income Bemba men left the territory to look for work in the mining areas to the south. Between 40 and 60 per cent of males were absent from the area in 1931. Although this phenomenon probably only dates from the nineteen twenties it has already had such marked effects on the marriage system of the Bemba that it is reflected in the chisungu rite.

The environment of the Bemba is also responsible for those health conditions which are the source of many of their anxieties. Malaria is endemic and the figures for pulmonary disease were very high during my visit. The mortality of children of under three years of age was very severe. This was thought by medical experts to be due to the fact that children had no milk at all after they were weaned, usually between their second and third year; also to infections resulting in dysentery. Death in childbirth was not uncommon. Girls seemed to bear their first child immediately after puberty, at about 15 or 16 years. They received little skilled care either before or after childbirth, and the wide dispersal of the villages made it difficult for the Government to provide European medical facilities. The traditional processes of delivery were exhausting in the extreme to the mother and it was almost impossible for a Bemba midwife to secure conditions that her European counterpart would consider clean.

Bemba women seemed to accept the period of food shortage to which they had become accustomed but they were obsessed with the risks that their children ran and their magic was very largely concerned with rites designed to save their babies' health. The chisungu ceremony is a case in point.

IDEOLOGY AND DOGMA

769 The Bemba attribute their blessings and misfortunes to super-
775 natural agencies, which are set in motion either by persons, dead
●789 or living, or by impersonal magic forces, good or evil. They do not believe in the dogma of chance.[1]

769 (*a*) The Personal beings include: (i) *the spirits of ancestors*
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[1] I owe this term to Godfrey and Monica Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change*, 1945.

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(*mipashi*) mainly of the matrilineal line, which can be addressed at spirit shrines, the burial places of dead chiefs or in the huts of their individual descendants. They can also be born again with each new child, who acquires a *mupashi* as a guardian spirit, either from his mother's or his father's line, or from the royal dynasty of the territory in which he is born. These guardian spirits can also be inherited, and each dead man or woman is succeeded by a close relative of the same sex who acquires his or her name and guardian spirit.

(ii) *Malignant spirits*, (*fiwa*) who are the spirits of those who died with a feeling of injury because of some violent death, or who left the world with a sense of grievance. *Fiwa* return to strike their descendants with illness or misfortune.

(iii) *Living persons* who can produce good fortune by blessing (*ukupala amate*), which they do chiefly by calling on the ancestral spirits to which they have special right of address; or cursing, which they do through some less specified evil force. The blessings of a chief or a man in authority are particularly potent because of the great spirits such powerful persons have access to. The head of a matrilineage, or an important member of it can also bless in this way. A great social personage who has been injured or not given his due, is feared because he may withhold the blessings of the spirits, or actually pronounce curses (*ukutipa* or *ukulapishya*). The curse is specially important in relation to procreation and childbirth, since the malevolent wishes of the father's sister can produce barrenness in the woman, or impotence in the man. This is described as 'the great curse'. There are, however, a number of curses which can be used by injured people, who 'throw lightning' or are said to be able to 'throw lions', or who can threaten to curse, if their property is stolen, or when specially distressed by the treatment they have received.

(*b*) Impersonal forces include (i) *Magic* in general (*bwanga*), which is the force contained in the leaves, roots or barks of various trees or shrubs and a number of activating agencies (*fishimba*), such as parts of animals or human beings, which can be used by the specialist magician (*yanga*) for beneficent purposes (health, the production of crops, fertility and success) or for harmful purposes (illness, death or crop failure). *Buloshi* is evil magic or

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789 [754] witchcraft, handled by people believed to have supernatural powers.

(ii) *The magic influence of sex, blood and fire* which, when brought 789 into wrongful contact with each other, are thought to be highly 831 dangerous to every Bemba, but particularly to babies and young 372 children, who are believed to be vulnerable to so many dangers; and to chiefs, on whom the prosperity of the land is held to depend. This system of beliefs is extremely complex, and yet it is necessary to try to understand it, if the meaning of the chisungu is to be grasped. The dogma relating sex and fire is the *idée maîtresse* behind most of the ritual behaviour of the Bemba.

834 Briefly speaking, sex relations according to Bemba dogma make 784 a couple 'hot'. In this state it is dangerous for them to approach 783 the ancestral spirits in any rite of prayer or sacrifice; and any chief 622 or headman who attempted to perform such a ceremony without purification would run the risk of bringing disaster on his district. [793] The chief's shrines are guarded by old women or hereditary priests who keep sex taboos. For the chief to be casual in keeping sex taboos, or to approach his ancestors without purification is 'to spoil the land' (*ukuonaula icalo*).

831 All persons of sex maturity are in fact distinguished by a special 372 term (*wa kuboko*) and are excluded from a number of rites on the 784 ground that they are 'hot', or are likely to be 'hot'. Such people 783 can pollute the fireplace of a hut by touching it, and then a baby 854 fed with gruel cooked on this fire might sicken and die. Parents 846 who do not purify themselves after intercourse run the risk of killing their children by accidentally touching the family hearth. Adulterers are more dangerous still, as they cannot purify themselves since the necessary rite can only be carried out by husband and wife. Small babies and their mothers are therefore kept away from beer drinks where 'bad' people congregate drinking round the fire without care. The baby's gruel is often cooked on a separate hearth and in a separate pot. The art of Bemba motherhood in fact consists very largely in guarding children from danger from fire. A newly born baby is 'unripe' (*mubishi*) and is in a specially precarious position until it has been 'taken' by its parents (*ukupoka umwana*) by an act of intercourse and the lighting of new fire, when it is a few months old. To save the baby, it must be 'brought to the fire' by being held over the flames of a doctored

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with her, is also a danger to all the men concerned. These triple relationships are constantly mentioned in court cases and are made the subject of claims by the injured family of a dead man or woman who declare that 'their child' has been killed in that way. They recur in narratives of the rather lurid sex lives of Bemba princesses who are expected to take many lovers, but must not bring trouble on the land by simultaneous relations of this kind.

Lastly, in common with many Bantu peoples, Bemba believe that, if a man commits adultery while his wife is pregnant, the baby is born dead. He has taken the spirit of the child (*asendo umupashi wa umwana*). If the woman is unfaithful while she is pregnant, then she herself dies in childbirth unless she confesses and gets medicine in time.[1]

I have dilated on this system of attitudes and beliefs because I think it fundamental to the understanding of Bemba puberty ritual and also because it cannot fail, I think, to strike the field-worker in this area as one of the basic elements of tribal dogma. It would be impossible to live long in a Bemba village without running constantly across instances of the effects of these beliefs whether in terms of ritual or in the most practical problems of cooking, catering and entertaining. If the Bemba can be said to have an ideological obsession in the sense that they are constantly pre-occupied with one set of fears, it is this belief in the magical potency of sex, fire and blood. Such emotional attitudes set us puzzling problems. In this chapter I shall confine myself to stating them. Later in the book I hope at least to suggest some hypotheses which may stimulate comparative research in other tribes holding similar beliefs.

To recapitulate, Bemba dogma stresses the role of the ancestors in determining human fortunes as well as the power of injured spirits, who revenge the injustices they suffered on earth on the

[1] It will be seen from the above that the causes of barrenness or death in childbirth are numerous among the Bemba. Barrenness may be due to the special curse of the father's sister; to an injured spirit returning to punish a descendant at random; to allowing the umbilical cord of a baby to fall to the ground; to adultery; or to witchcraft. Miscarriage is thought to be due to an injured spirit shaking the womb of the pregnant woman so that the baby falls out; when it occurs all the women of the matrilineage must be treated with medicine. Death in childbirth is due to the adultery of the mother herself.

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769 living. It also emphasizes the magical powers associated with sex
831 which is linked with feelings of guilt and anxiety expressed in the taboos clustered round marriage, childbirth and the rearing of children. This feeling of guilt is so widely diffused that innocent
[783] people are thought to suffer from the magical results of a sex misdemeanour committed by someone else.

581 These beliefs support the institution of marriage since safety
●789 from magical danger is acquired by means of a ceremony which can
837 only be carried out by a man's head wife. No Bemba supposes that a husband will be kept from adultery by this means, but the legal wife is the only person who can secure him and those near him from the resultant punishment.

622 The reader is asked to bear in mind, without attempting further
372 analysis, the association that exists in Bemba ideology between
831 chieftainship, fire, sex and power to influence the fertility of the
789 land and its people, and to remember that these powers are hurt
753 by blood, intercourse out of marriage, death, murder, lion-killing and all cold, terrible or 'bad things' (*fibi*). Fertility which is so much desired is produced by conduct pleasing to the ancestors, and to senior and especially paternal relatives, the blessings of persons in authority and the carrying out of the ritual of marriage. Illness is inflicted usually on the innocent party, by sex relations out of marriage without ritual purification, by bad conduct, and because of injury to people who, since they have died in a state of righteous indignation, will 'come back' to haunt the family which did them wrong.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE

642 The most characteristic features of the Bemba social structure
611 are its hierarchical and authoritarian type of government, of which
591 the apex is a paramount chief believed to have supernatural powers; and its system of matrilineal descent with uxorilocal marriage.

643 The political structure of the Bemba is a centralized one. Its unity under a single head, the *Citimukulu*, was achieved, in 1931 at any rate, because of a belief in the spiritual powers the king was

Social Structure

When a man dies his name, his kinship duties and his hereditary bow are passed on to his sister's son or to her grandson through a daughter. The heir actually becomes the dead man in a social sense: he adopts the kinship terms the latter used, calling, for instance, 'maternal nephew' the person he would previously have called 'brother'. The same positional succession takes place in the matrilineal line for women, and a dead woman will be replaced by her sister or a maternal granddaughter. In this system women are honoured as the bearers of many children and such a woman is said to found a house.

In the case of the royal crocodile clan the maintenance of descent is even more important. All senior chieftainships in Lubemba, the country of the Bemba, are held by members of the royal lineage.

A successor to such a chieftainship has access to 'great spirits', those of his dead predecessors, and he not only prays to them at the sacred shrines in his capital, but he acquires supernatural powers in his own person, so that he can bless and curse. His good health and vitality bring blessings to the community, and his ill-health or death, the reverse.

Princesses have the special duty to bear fine children in order to provide the country with chiefs, and they are honoured for doing so. The spirits of royal women are mentioned in prayer in tender and grateful terms as 'those who carried us in skins on their backs and gave us suck'. The first ancestress, Bwalya Cabala, is buried in a grove which is one of the most sacred places in Lubemba.[1]

Bemba clans are not segmentary. The effective kinship group within the clan is a three or four generation group, the men and women who trace their descent to a common great-grandmother and who remember a village of origin (*cifulo*). These are not corporate matrilineages in any territorial sense. The kinship system makes for a great deal of movement from village to village during a man's or a woman's life. The villages themselves change in composition and move from place to place following the shifting cultivation.

There appear to be no fixed leaders of the matrilineage, except in the case of the royal dynasty, but this group is the unit of succession to the offices and the names of dead men and women and to their ancestral spirits.

[1] Cf. *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia*, p. 357.

The Cultural Setting

593 With this system of matrilineal descent the ties between a
604 woman and her brother are very close. The woman produces children who are the heirs of her brothers. The man is the natural guardian of his sisters' children, and he must be consulted about his uterine niece's marriage and could claim the right to marry her where he pleased. He could protect her after her marriage if he wished to do so. The mother's brother could generally claim possession of his sister's children if her marriage broke down. In
[567] the old days he could give one of the children as a slave or a blood-wite to the head of a family to whom he or one of the lineage group owed reparation. He could command the services of his sister's son and bid him follow him to war. The woman in her turn could com-
● [789] mand the services of her brother's daughter and was thought to be able to bless or curse the fertility of the latter's marriage. Brother and sister can take each other's property and behave in a free and easy way with each other.

591 Marriage is uxorilocal among the Bemba and among kindred
171 tribes such as the Bisa, Lala, Lamba, Cewa, and Kaonde which
596 also perform a kind of chisungu ceremony. A young man who marries goes to live in his wife's village where he builds himself a hut and becomes a member of her extended family. This is a domestic and economic unit. The sons-in-law work together under
[606] the father-in-law and the daughters with their mother. The man gives service to his father-in-law rather than cattle or other goods as in most other Bantu societies. A young couple has no cooking fire of its own to begin with. The girl cooks with her mother and sends food to her husband at the man's shelter, where he sits with his friends. At first the couple have no granary of their own and no gardens and when they acquire the latter, later in their married life, the gardens are cleared near those of the rest of the extended family group.

596 As a family group of this kind grows in size, its head often
621 chooses to separate from the old village and to start a new one of his own. Hence the desire of a Bemba to have many daughters in order to be able 'to found a house'.

591 After the marriage has been established, and children have been born to the union, it remains a question for individual decision whether the husband is given permission to remove his

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562 ancestral shrines. They are also the potential mothers of future
644 chiefs and provide their brothers' heirs. Senior princesses stride in
622 and out of their brothers' royal enclosures, advise them, hector them and borrow their things. The senior wives of chiefs are also
[789] honoured highly since they hold in their charge the royal fire and they can, by their conduct, destroy or maintain the supernatural powers of the chief. They are thus able at any time to 'spoil the land'.

562 In courts of law women can plead their own cases; this is most unusual in the patrilineal societies to the south. When contracting their first marriage they are under the control of their fathers' and their mothers' brothers, but they are fairly free to contract second
[587 marriages at their own wish. They are certainly able to break a
586] marriage contract with much greater ease than women in patrilineal Bantu societies who pass under the control of their husband's patrilineage on the transfer of cattle at marriage, and divorce is rather frequent in this society. Bemba women have the reputation on the copper belt of Northern Rhodesia for being quite unmanageable by men of other tribes. Such men shrug their shoulders, raise their eyes to heaven and say 'These Bemba women! My word! They are fierceness itself'.

Compared to many patrilineal tribes, the Bemba women seem to have a high status. Parents welcome the birth of girls since they bring husbands into their village and build up its strength. Daughters become founders of new lines since the succession passes through them. When they first marry they are under the very definite authority of their relatives, but they are 'at home' whereas their husbands are outsiders from other villages. They have the support of their parents and may form part of a solid phalanx of married sisters, and they are therefore in an extremely strong position. As they become mothers and grandmothers their authority increases. Teknonymy is practised and women are called
[601] by the names of their sons or daughters with the female prefix 'na' On the birth of the first grandchild their name is changed to grandmother of so-and-so—this is a title of respect.[1] The Bemba woman is shy and submissive as a girl, but once a grandmother she

[1] E.g. Na-Kampamba = the mother of Kampamba;
Nakulu-Canda = the grandmother of the Canda.

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brother is looking after her.' 'There is the brother. He says, "Hush! don't cry! Follow me. I am going to look after you now." ' 'Yes, she must honour her brother now because her father is dead.' Over and over again details of the figures were criticized and admired. Most Bemba delight in describing the brother-sister relationship which is such a pivot of the matrilineal system. They refer to it in proverb and folk-tale, and adopt a specially sentimental tone in speaking of it in daily life. Most of the chisungu ritual stresses the husband's duty to feed and clothe his wife, but here the women seem to emphazise the brother's perpetual obligation to look after his sister before, during and after her marriage. Some obscene jokes made about the navel of the woman's figure made me wonder whether there was also some representation of brother-sister incest, but the navel itself is considered an amusing and obscene part of the body by the Bemba, so that I do not know if I am right.

The bed

A third model standing against the wall consisted of three hollow squares of clay. It was known as the bed or the 'blankets'. This model did not seem to attract much attention, although women began to sing a song about a great *nacimbusa* wearing a plumed head-dress. (No. 23)

(One woman said the model represented the girl's bed. Another that it was to teach the girl that even if her husband gave her no blankets or clothing yet she was to stay with him. Whatever he did she was just to look on (*ukutamba*) and not to speak of it to her friends. In the old days, she added, a girl could not get a divorce from a man who did not provide for her. If she went to complain, her grandmother would merely say, 'Well, you must sit naked, then. Stay with the fool you are with'. (*cipuba cobe.*))

Magic of attraction

After this hard day's work, I was surprised to find that the whole design was suddenly pulled to pieces two hours after it was finished and when it had only just been shown to the *banacisungu*. Every marrow seed was taken out carefully and whitened in sorghum flour for use the following day. The clay was stacked up outside the hut. Nangoshye remained behind to stick some magic leaves in the roof of the hut. 'It is magic (*bwanga*). We put it there

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The Ceremony

so that there will be a lot of visitors and everyone will say the chisungu is a very good one indeed.'

The rest of the company had already returned exhausted to their homes.

TENTH DAY

The guinea-fowl

The next day was spent in the same laborious fashion. A stellate design covering the whole floor was modelled and covered with colour and seeds. It was described as the guinea-fowl design (*amakanga*) and appeared to be associated with agricultural fertility as in the case of the guinea-fowl dance described on page 71.

('It is to remind the girl not to forget her hoe, and that she is to go on giving the people food', said one of my best informants. The guinea-fowl is also a sexual symbol. (See page 81.))

Again the elaborate models were cleared away at night. Desultory drumming and dancing went on until late.

ELEVENTH DAY

The festive porridge eating (bwali bwa ukuangala)

I was called in the middle of the morning to see an enormous cooking-pot full of water being set on the fire in the hut of the mother of one of the girls. Ordinary porridge was to be made, but the cooking itself was a ritual act. The flour was first stirred in by Nangoshye, who then handed over the spoon to one of the girl's maternal relatives. When the meal was cooked the girl's maternal grandmother was called to dish up the porridge and to hide *mbusa* in it. She filled a great enamel basin with porridge served in the usual way, and then stuck on top of it a small rounded lump of the cooked meal filled with the domestic *mbusa* (tobacco, salt, beads, meat, red dye and a small lump of whitewash). The whole was then decorated with marrow seeds and red dye and carried to the chisungu hut. Here a similar bowl had been prepared by the mother of the second girl and it stood waiting with the accompanying relish beside it.

It was a day of offering and receiving offerings—from the girls' mothers to the *banacimbusa*; from the younger *nacimbusa* to the

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881 They also sang again and again a song about the white egret (No. 48) as they surrounded the whitened forms of the girls and danced them back to the village.

As we came near the houses men sitting in the doorways of their huts lowered their eyes ostentatiously as we passed.

We assembled at the initiation hut and began again songs and offerings of respect to the *nacimbusa* in order of precedence. All the relatives in the hut were touched with white clay. The girls were then led to the house of the village headmen who 'spat the blessings of the spirits' on them, (*ukupala amate*).

[302] (This ceremony, literally 'going to whitewash', seemed to be thought rather romantic and interesting by the women. They referred to the girls throughout in an almost sentimental way as English women speak of the beauty of brides on their wedding day. 'We make the girls white. We make them beautiful.' 'We make them white like egrets.' 'Yes, they are white now from the stain of the blood.' 'It is finished now, the thing that was red.')

[783 The *ukuya kumpemba* seems to mark a definite stage in the 789] ritual. It is a rite of purification from the menstrual blood and a form of beauty magic. It is followed by the second calling of the blessings of the ancestral spirits.

FIFTEENTH DAY

The shelter and the screen

881 Nangoshye and a few helpers went out in the middle of the 342 morning to collect stout logs in the bush. By the early afternoon I found them hard at work setting a grass roof on five strong uprights to form a small shelter of the type commonly found in Bemba villages. The supports and roof were covered with clay and the whole stuck with the inevitable beans, pumpkin seeds, red cam wood and white flour. On top of the roof a stick was frayed out to form a plume, or *ngala*. The whole erection was described as an *nsaka*, or a man's shelter, or an *nchenje*, the special term used for the shelter built by the head army captain in a chief's village. This was a place of protection, a spot where the soldiers gathered together in the evening.

(The symbolism was rather obscure, not only to me, but also apparently to many of the women engaged in making the shelter.

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considerable violence of expression, amounted often to little more than saying that the girl is initiated to prevent her remaining uninitiated.[1]

Women were prepared to be much more specific. Their answers did not refer to marriage but to the transformation of the young girl. Their replies could be divided into three types which reflect three aspects of the rite in Bemba eyes. The chisungu is danced they say, to make the girl grow (*ukumukushya*); to teach her (*ukumufunda*); and 'to make her a woman as we are'. The first object has the clarity of the typical magic intention. It is a rite designed to change the course of nature by supernatural means, and as we shall see, to test whether these changes have been brought about. The second is described as 'teaching', with the use of the word commonly now employed for teaching in European schools, although, as we shall see, this form of teaching is also a type of ritual behaviour, possibly with magic intent. The third purpose was expressed with greater vagueness and was one concerning which attitudes had to be mainly deduced.

(*a*) *The magic of growth and nubility.* What does the word *ukukushya* mean? It is the causative form of the word 'to grow'. In other words 'We do the rite to grow the girl'. It is used primarily of the jumping tests at the beginning of the rite and at two subsequent stages, that is to say the first, the seventeenth and the last days. The chisungu has of course many of the features common to rites of transition in the sense in which Van Gennep uses the term. The ritual separation of the girls was clearly marked. They slept in a separate hut and were never seen during the day unless actually participating in a ceremony. They concealed themselves very effectively, but they were also ritually hidden. They entered the initiation hut on the first day under the cover of blankets and they remained hidden in this way until the third day when they returned from the first woodland ceremony. They were covered with branches in the rite described as the hiding or fencing in of the girls. A song described them as crawling into a secret place as if through a tunnel.

[1] Young men would very often admit that most girls were not now 'danced' but even among educated Bemba I noticed a good deal of nostalgia for the old days when girls were 'taught'.

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The Interpretation of the Ceremony

X 881 ● 789 Social isolation was also marked by abstention from the usual habits of life. The girls wore old and shabby cloths tied round their waists. They were three times rebuked for tying their cloths above their breasts in the ordinary fashion of Bemba women. Their food was cooked on a separate fire. They were not allowed to wash or shave. This isolation was shared to some extent by all the actors of the chisungu. For instance, the men of the community were kept away from the important ceremonial and were rebuked for passing near the spot where the pottery emblems were made. They consistently looked the other way when the procession of women went through the village, and stood with lowered eyes when the girls were brought from the ceremony of whitening. The mothers of [177] the girls and the *nacimbusa* should have shared the isolation of the candidates by keeping washing and shaving taboos, but airily explained their lapse by saying that they were 'nearly Christians'.

Such symbolic acts of separation occur in other forms of Bemba ritual when a change of social role has taken place, such as in the marriage ceremony proper or the rite of installation of a chief. But the characteristic element here is the number of stages the girl has to pass, and also the emphasis on the difficulty, not only of the new life, but of the tests of maturity the girl has to pass. The candidates were 'given their gardens' or made free to garden on their own. Their new fire was ritually lit and they were made free to touch the fireplace, to cook food, and to offer it to other women in the rite of the *namushimwa*. They were twice made free to eat food, once after the lighting of the *namushimwa* fire, and once by the touching of their lips with porridge and with the livers of the ritually cooked chickens on the last night of the ceremony. They were bathed, shaved, dressed in new clothes and finally brought out to receive the congratulations of the community.

These are rites of role assumption, but is there not also an element of test, or actually of ordeal, in the magic sense of the word? It is difficult to say whether the symbolic acts of separation and rejoining the community are thought to cause social maturation and can thus be ranked as magic of growth; or whether they are signs of the readiness of the candidate for such changes, or signs

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that the change has successfully occurred. Probably all three elements are combined in the chisungu but the symbolic jumps seemed to me to be certainly in the nature of a test or omen. The agitation of the candidates' mothers was extreme. 'What happens if the girl fails to clear the jump?' 'Nothing, but it is very good if she does. Anyhow she *must* jump it. We do not let them fail.' Such statements were made about the test of the girls' ability to catch the water insects in their mouths, or to kill the chickens by bruising their heads on the last night, and the bridegrooms' shooting at the mark on the wall.

An analysis of the song interpretations also shows the strong emphasis that is placed throughout the rite, on the duty of the girl to do difficult and unprecedented things, to climb up trees backwards or to crawl backwards for instance. The informants explained that such songs stress the difficulty of what the girl has to do. They tell her that she is to do something she has never done before and accept new demands made on her.

Van Gennep has stressed the significance of puberty ritual as the expression of a change of status. But it must not be forgotten that the Bemba women say 'we make her grow' and I believe that it will be found that many of the tests of endurance in initiation ceremonies, like 'the teasing of the girls' in the chisungu, are not only signs of ritual submission to authority and payments made for the receipt of magic protection but also are forms of ordeal or oracle magic. In other words they reflect the anxiety of parents and relatives as to whether the candidates really are grown up or socially fit for married life, as well as the recognition of the society that a change of status has occurred. It will be remembered that the mother of the girl is blamed if her daughter is shown not to have social sense or '*mano*' (page 75).

Ukukushya is also the word used for the rites designed to protect the girl from the dangers associated with the physical onset of puberty and to make it possible for her to have safe intercourse with her husband and a safe delivery of her child. Women say with lowered eyes that the chisungu is to remove the girl's fear, the fear of blood and the dangers of sex and fire which I have described so fully.

It is difficult to separate this aspect of the ceremony from the

The Interpretation of the Ceremony

881 It is difficult to separate this aspect of the ceremony from the
789 other acts that compose it since the whole chisungu is thought to
841 contribute to this end, but the theme of the removal of danger is seen in a number of isolated songs and mimes. In one of the first songs, the danger is described as a stone that falls off the girls. The menstrual blood is represented throughout by the colour red on pottery emblems and house designs, by the red cam wood enclosed in the emblem bundles, or the light of the torch glowing red inside the model of the star (see Appendix C).

The blood is removed by whitening. One of the designs on the hut wall is known by the archaic term for whitewash. The girls themselves are painted white like the egret and they are likened to beautiful white birds. The egret is modelled as a clay *mbusa* to be given to the candidates on the last night.

Red cam wood is also used as a sign of safe return from battle. The candidates and the main actors in the ceremony were daubed with the crimson powder on four occasions—after the first jump over the faggots; on the seventh day after the first woodland ceremony; after the whitening magic; and on the last day when the symbolic lion is brought back dead to the village. The girls and their families have done something fearful and they have succeeded. They have been through danger and have escaped. The culture teaches terror of menstrual blood. The chisungu provides the means of safety. It is magic of protection which can only be secured, like other forms of magic help, by carrying out prescribed acts and by paying penalties or dues to those in possession of the secret, in this case the *nacimbusa*. It is also a series of representations or mimes depicting safety and giving a sign that safety has been reached.

881 The magic of fertility is also clearly another of the elements in
789 the chisungu ritual. The whole ceremony makes the girl nubile and
842 thus potentially fertile, but different acts are more specifically described as reproducing the sex act. They call to mind the fish which is a fertile animal and lays many eggs. One of the hut drawings also depicts a fish. The *musuku* tree is associated with fertility and is honoured in the first woodland rite. The gardening mimes are carried out at its roots. The mock bridegrooms appear with leaf horns on their heads like the witchdoctors who possess fertility magic. A snake is said to be hidden in the roof of the hut.

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Expressed Purposes of the Chisungu

The ritual lighting of the girl's fire by the father's sister was described as 'begging for parenthood'. Later a branch of the *mupundu* tree, from which women gather fruit, is stuck in the roof of the initiation huts in order to make the girls equally fruitful. Two of the wall designs represent beans which are commonly symbols of fertility. One of the hut designs represents the girl's bed. In the second woodland ceremony the *mwenge*, the woman's tree, is honoured, and beer poured on its roots. One of its branches crossed with the male tree, the *mulombwa*, forms the hoop over which the girls must jump.

It is difficult to be certain how far human fertility is associated with agricultural fertility in these rites. I was never specifically told that the garden mimes were done to make the gardens yield, but merely to 'teach the girls to garden', but it would certainly be hard to distinguish very clearly between the productivity of the girls and the productivity of the seeds they sow in rites which involve the constant handling of seeds of different kinds.

To conclude I believe that the women in charge of this ceremony were convinced that they were causing supernatural changes to take place in the girls under their care, as well as marking those changes. They were changing an alarming condition to a safe one, and securing the transition from a calm but unproductive girlhood to a potentially dangerous but fertile womanhood. They were making the girls grow as well as teaching them. Hence I feel justified in speaking on the 'magic' aspects of the rite.

(*b*) *The teaching of the girls* (*ukufunda*). As we have seen, Bemba women explain that they are teaching the candidates during the chisungu ceremony. They say with great emphasis and characteristic repetition 'We teach and teach and teach the girls' and they sometimes add 'We make them clever' using the causative form of the verb 'to be intelligent and socially competent and to have a knowledge of etiquette', (*ukubacenjela*).

The educational function of puberty ritual has often been stressed by anthropologists and lectures on primitive education were formerly largely concerned with accounts of initiation schools, sometimes described as 'the only formal education' received by the primitive child. Most of the accounts of girls'

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Songs Sung During the Ceremony

No. 40. *The star* (*ntanda*) (Fig. 3). This is a big pot with a narrow mouth and perforated sides. A lighted taper is put inside so that it shines out to represent star-light. A pottery lid is then fitted on top and the initiated girl must balance it on her head, if possible with the torch remaining alight inside. The company sings:

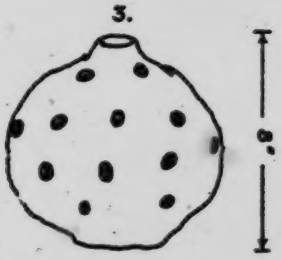

Fig. 3. *The Star* (*with perforations so that a lighted taper will burn inside*).

Ulekashye ntanda bushiku;	You gaze at the stars at night;
Ulantuka ukashika.	You revile me obscenely.

Interpretation. Here there seems to be a complicated double meaning, and probably more than two. Women answered questions about this figurine with shame and hesitation. They said that the light which shone through was the blood inside the woman, which it is so terrible to display. *Ukashika* is to be grave, weighty but also to become red. The most horrible curse a man can use is to swear by the menstruation of his wife. It is a thing which a woman can hardly bring herself to whisper in explanation. The surface meaning is, however, given cheerfully. However badly a husband swears at his wife, she must not answer back. This is a typical example of words with a readily repeatable meaning and concealed associations known as 'things underneath' (*fintu fya panshi*).

No. 41. *The little spoon* (*kakombo*) (Fig. 4). The initiate stands opposite the 'bridegroom' on the last night of the ceremony.[1] She pretends to pour water on 'his' hands with the model of the spoon

[1] Represented by his sister.

624 blessing the gardens before firing, the seeds before sowing, and the first fruits of a number of crops. He must organise the payment of tribute and labour to the district chief and pass on chiefly orders and requests. His privileges include the right to personal service from younger relatives and tribute of beer and/or meat. Primarily, however, the position is valued not for economic advantage but for the authority it brings, the command over a small following and the favour of a chief. The sanctions for this authority consist mainly in the headman's popularity, the strength of kinship ties between him and the villagers and their belief that it is dangerous to allow an elder relative to die while cherishing a sense of injury. Ultimately, of course, the headman's power depends on the support of his territorial chief and nowadays of the British Administration.

621 The functions of the different types of Bemba chief differ only in degree from those of the headman. Like a headman, a chief is in charge of his
622 own village, his *musumba*, and he tries to maintain and augment this community by acquiring a reputation for popularity and generosity. A chief's village in the old days was described as having thousands of inhabitants. Big chiefs' villages observed by Richards in 1934 had 400 to 600 huts. They were divided into quarters (*fitenta*) ruled over by loyal supporters of the chief, known as *bafilolo*.

622 Besides administering his own village the chief was responsible for mak-
ing and confirming the appointment of headmen; and presiding over a court
[692] composed of advisers mainly drawn from his own village. Witchcraft cases
[681] had to be brought to a chief and only the more important among them could administer the poison ordeal by *mwafi*. The chief could in the old days punish by savage mutilations and by selling a man into slavery. Economically the chief was responsible for initiating agricultural activities by performing the necessary rite at the time of tree-cutting, sowing or harvesting.
With the tribute labour at his disposal he made big gardens and built gran-
[721] aries from which he fed his courtiers, messengers and workers. The chief initiated military raids and other forms of warfare, and the great Bemba chiefs maintained their monopoly of Arab guns which they traded for slaves. Bemba country was, in fact, an area of strong centralised government. The chieftains of the Aushi, Unga and other associated tribelets were on a much smaller scale and weaker in political organisation.

[789] But the most important and characteristic activities of the Bemba chiefs are ritual. They are reckoned to have in their own persons power to bless and curse. They have to be protected from contact with death and to keep
[763] sex taboos of various kinds for the welfare of the whole territory. It is probable that the Bemba Paramount Chief in the old days might have been described as a "divine king" in Frazer's sense of the word; he was strangled
[769] when on the point of death so that his spirit should pass into the land. The Bemba chief derives his ritual power from the fact that he has succeeded to the names of dead chiefs and is thus enabled to call on a long line of ancestral spirits. Chiefs possess sacred relics - usually stools - which are
622 known as *babenye* and kept in special huts protected by "wives of the dead"
778 or descendants of wives of earlier chiefs. An approach to the ancestral spirits is made at these shrines. Chiefs also sacrifice at the deserted shrines of their predecessors (*nfuba*) and at other spirit centres in the area.

Much of their power depends on the keeping of sex taboos and the

769 Spirits are also worshipped, as has been mentioned, at the chiefs'
778 relic huts, at the sites of dead chiefs' villages, which are revered as spirit centres, and at remarkable natural objects such as caves and waterfalls (*ngulu*) which are also thought to be spirit centres. Major chiefs are buried in a sacred grove guarded with great care by a priest, the
[782] *shimwalule*. This is the home of the most powerful tribal spirits and an animal used to be sacrificed here on the rare occasions when drought was
[787] threatened. The spirits of the chiefs also manifest themselves in the presence of possessed men and women who prophesy and heal. Ancestral spirits are approached by the man or woman who has succeeded to their name and guardian spirit, that is to say, the head of a small local lineage, a headman or a chief.

769 Ancestral spirits are addressed after a ritual sex act between the
782 officiant and his wife, followed by ceremonial purification. The spirits
783 are addressed by name and some form of sacrifice, e.g. beer, cloth, flour and chickens, is offered to them.

(c) MAGIC AND WITCHCRAFT

789 Bemba and Bisa believe in the potency of *bwanga* which may be translated as "magic". Bemba magical rites depend for the most part on medicine (*muti*), usually part of a plant or tree, sometimes with the addition of energizing charms giving potency to the medicine. Words are sometimes used but, as with the Azande, there is less insistence on and less importance attached to the spell than to the rite and the medicines. It is the magician (*Ng'anga*) who procures and uses the medicine and from whom it may be purchased. To ensure effectiveness the *Ng'anga* must invoke *Lesa*, without whose consent the medicines are thought to be ineffectual.

Magic is used for general protective purposes - to ensure fertility, good health and luck, to give staying power to food. In the economic sphere magic seems to be used less among the Bemba than the Bisa. Richards suggests that the greater development of the ancestral cult among the former is the reason for this.(1)

754 Magic is also used in divination. The commonest form of divination
787 is the rubbing of an axe over a skin until it sticks in answer to a question, and boiling of medicine in a pot until the mixture bubbles over one side or the other side. Another characteristic form of Bemba divination is the hunting ritual used to ascertain the cause of a person's death, according to whether a male or female animal is first driven into the hunting nets. This rite can be used as a preliminary test for witchcraft. In the old days the *lilemfia*, or war fetish, originally obtained from the Lunda chiefs near Lake Mweru was employed. This was a horn placed on a spike which was
[278] thought only to work if smeared with the blood of a human victim. *Mwafi*, the poison used as a test for witchcraft from the Southern Sudan to Southern Rhodesia, was used by the senior chiefs in this area.

754 Evil magic, or sorcery, was distinguished as *buloshi*, a term which covers witchcraft, in the sense of inborn power, as well as the manipulation

(1) Richards, 6, 1939, pp.356, 187.

791 778 The *ng'anga* (magicians) of whose activity little is known, dwelt in a banana grove just south of the capital which no outsiders could enter on pain of death.(1)

782 789 787 [726] Human sacrifices were made at the capital.(2) Victims were prisoners of war and, failing them, the Kazembe's own subjects. Human blood, hearts and entrails are mentioned among the ingredients of which medicines were made.(3) Horns containing medicine were supposed to give protection from witchcraft. Before any hazardous enterprise - war, hunting, travel - was undertaken, an oracle was consulted(4) and, if prospects looked auspicious, a medicine was prepared.(5)

264 643 787 The Kazembe was said to receive warnings of hostile machinations in dreams. If he dreamt of someone more than once this was a sign that the man was plotting against him and must be put to death.(6) Crawford was informed that the Kazembe was ritually insulted during his meals, and he describes this in some detail.(7) "The king eats in a mysterious mode called *kapoano*... The 'old doctors' cursed him while he ate, his face veiled: 'Kazembe should die! He is no man! A beast! Kill the beast, oh! son of Temena (his mother's name)' ". The *mondo* was sounded to let people know that Kazembe was having his meal, and no one else was allowed to eat at the same time.

834 783 Ritual cleansing is prescribed after sexual intercourse. A man who kills a lion has to be washed in *nshipa* medicine by the headman before he can enter the village, and may not eat or speak till this has been done.

226 789 [784] [834] A wealth of ritual attached to fishing. Ritual authority was vested in the Shila "owners of the land".(8) The ceremony of *ukufungule sabi* (unlocking the fish) was performed annually towards the middle of the dry season on all the waters except the Luapula which "belongs to God". Bits of medicine were attached to the nets in order to ensure a good catch and prevent the nets from being torn. Charms were worn by fishermen or suspended at the bows to protect the canoe from being capsized by hippo or crocodiles. When the canoe was first launched the women sprinkled it with a little cassava flour to ensure plentiful catches. A women, particularly when carrying a child, was forbidden to step over a net. Sexual relations were tabooed when the fish were being poisoned. Lake Mweru was apparently never crossed south of Kilwa island, according to Livingstone.(9) At the "cursing" ceremony on Lake Mweru the dead men drowned in the lake were called by name and reprimanded.(10) Those who came safe ashore after their boats had foundered were greeted with a deliverance song and led in a thanksgiving procession.(11)

(1) Gamitto, I, p.358.
(2) Pereira puts the number of human victims at twenty a day (Livingstone, I, p.265). This is probably no more trustworthy than is his statement that Kazembe's army numbered 20,000 trained soldiers. R.J. Moore discusses human sacrifices as if at the time he wrote (1937) they were still common and an essential part of the salt-making ritual. The victim, according to him, is "nowadays usually a child".
(3) Burton, p.126.
(4) ibid., p.228.
(5) ibid., p.128.
(6) Livingstone, I, p.277.
(7) Crawford, 2, p.104.
(8) Livingstone, op.cit., p.252.
(9) op.cit., p.269.
(10) Crawford, op.cit., p.105.
(11) ibid., pp.105-6.

613 When Makasa Ndakala died in 1939 Tungati was still alive but too old
622 now to worry about moving to claim his rightful post. The next senior son
644 was Luchembe the son of Mwamba Mubanga Chipoya C2 but he was not nominated because he was half mad. The next sons were Lukaka and Muchereka also sons of Chipoya C2. They also were old and refused to move from their places in Mpika and Luwingu. So the next choice was the last son of Chipoya C2 who was then Chief Misengo.

But whilst all this discussion had been going on in 1939, Nkula D14 had been pressing the claims of Mubanga, who was nephew to the deceased Makasa and was also of the house of Nkula. Mubanga actually went to Makasa and inherited, or rather tried to. But when he attempted to " take
● [789] the death off " the senior wife of the deceased, her body by magical means was turned round so that her feet appeared on the pillow instead of her head. This went on for some time and Mubanga was finally persuaded that the spirits disapproved his claim to be Makasa so he went back to his Mubanga post. The rightful heir, Misengo, took over and this time the spirits concurred.

This was an attempt of the Nkula branch of the clan to pack the gallery in its own favour. The members obviously thought that if the Makasa was a son of their branch he would influence the next choice of the Paramount in Nkula D14's favour. At the inheritance ceremonies he might use his power and point to Nkula D14 as " his father " and therefore Paramount. Another fact that encouraged their belief that Mubanga should succeed Makasa was that the Mubanga (or Lombe) is usually considered the stepping stone to the Makasa. It was in the past sometimes, and actually it should be for the next appointment. But after that the grading of salaries will probably make the Mubanga no longer a post worth arguing about.

622 The present Makasa, as we have said, is the youngest son of Chipoya C2.
644 The next senior son is the present Mubanga Lombe who tried to usurp the post one promotion ahead of his time in 1939. After him comes Mukwikile the last son of Chitimukulu Ponde C10. (Ignoring the four old men already quoted.) After Mukwikile the descent drops to the sons of the reigning Chitimukulu D1. The eldest available son of Chitimukulu D1 (the eldest in age is a simpleton) is Chief Mporokoso and he will not leave that post for Mubanga, and it may be doubted whether he would become Makasa, although that post does carry more honour. But the Makasa does not carry such a big salary as Mporokoso.

Next come Chisangaponde, Chipalo and Menga, and they, if tradition had been followed, should have been offered the Mubanga in 1939 in turn if Mukwikile did not take it. But when Mubanga made his ill-fated attempt to inherit Makasa, the vacant post of Mubanga was not even offered to Mukwikile as it should have been. What happened was that Chitimukulu D1 and Mwamba D3 had an argument. Quite a frequent occurrence. Chitimukulu D1 had earlier broken an old tradition by sending one of his sons to be Mporokoso instead of allowing Mwamba D3 to send of of his (see later). So Mwamba D3 now claimed the right to send one of his sons to Chitimukulu's side of the country. Chitimukulu D1 agreed and allowed Mwamba D3 to appoint a Mubanga. Mwamba D3 sent his eldest son who was at the time holding a minor post as Lwali in Mporokoso. (On the recommendation of the Superior Native Authority this petty post of Lwali was then abolished.) When the spirits decided that Ponde C10's son was the wrong man this young Lwali Mwamba left his newly acquired post of Mubanga and became

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in prayer. When a man or woman dies, his or her social personality must be immediately perpetuated by a successor who passes through a special ritual (*ukupyanika*) and thus acquires the name, the symbols of succession (a bow for a man and a girdle for the woman), and the *umupashi* of the dead man. By this social identification, a man assumes the latter's position in the kinship-group, uses the same kinship terms and, in the case of a chief, it is almost impossible to tell when a man is describing incidents which took place in his own life or those of an ancestor two or three generations dead. So important is this social perpetuation of the dead considered that immediately after a death, before the successor has finally been appointed, a small boy or girl, usually a maternal grandchild, is chosen to inherit the name of the deceased temporarily (*ukunwa menshi*, 'to drink the water'). He or she is given some small piece of the latter's property and thereafter addressed as grandfather or grandmother, or whatever the right kinship term may be.

In the same way, a chief, once he has succeeded to the name, the spirit, and the sacred relics of his predecessor, has magic influence over the productive capacity of his whole territory. His ill health or death, his pleasure or displeasure, his blessings or curses, can affect the prosperity of the people, and even his sex life reacts on the state of the community.[1] For a chief to break a sex taboo is an act which may cause calamity to the whole people, and the rites by which he is purified after sexual contacts form one of the most important elements in the politico-religious ceremonial requiring the participation of thirty or forty hereditary officials (*bakabilo*) in the case of the paramount. Conversely, legitimate sex intercourse, especially as prescribed on certain ritual occasions, may actually be a health-giving influence. Any headman has a certain degree of supernatural influence in his own village as the successor to his predecessor's *umupashi*, but a chief has considerably more. For all these reasons, ritual precautions guard the sacred person of a chief. Special taboos must be kept to preserve the ritual purity of the ruler's sacred fire, and his sacred

[1] There are rumours that chiefs were throttled by their hereditary councillors when they were obviously sick unto death, for fear they took 'the land' into the grave with them. This information was sent me by Mr. T. Fox-Pitt after I had left the country and was afterwards checked by Mr. Godfrey Wilson. In fact it is probable that in the old days the Bemba chiefs would fall under Frazer's definition of a 'divine king'.

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624 'feed his people' and actually does so if they are in need, besides dispensing hospitality to strangers.

[778] The head of the village acts as its ritual head. In the old days, he put up one village shrine to his own ancestors and one or more others to the dead chiefs of the land. This is still done in out-of-

[782] the-way parts of the country and in most places, I think, prayers are offered to these tutelary deities, whether shrines are built to them or no. The headman, like the chief, also influences the life of

[833] the community through his own person. He must 'warm the bush' (*ukukafye mpanga*) by an act of ritual intercourse with his

[788] wife before the huts of a new village are occupied. He blesses seeds for sowing, axes for tree-cutting, and first-fruits. His fire stands for the life of the community as a whole and must be ritually lighted when occasion demands. He presides over the

[787 special divination rites connected with village activities, such as
788] the founding of a new community or the death of a member, and blesses new babies or individuals who are sick.

In the political hierarchy, the headman has his definite place. No Bemba may cultivate land except as a member of a village group, and the headman is responsible for organizing the supply of tribute and labour which must be paid to a chief by the community as a whole. He accompanies his villagers to court when they have cases to present and often speaks for them. He transmits the orders of a chief to his people and nowadays those of the Government.

[602] His prerogatives are few in number. As head of a kinship-group, he can command personal service from his younger relatives and should be able to exact one day's work from his people on the first day of tree-cutting and sowing. He is always given tribute of beer or meat. But probably, apart from these few economic privileges, the Bemba headman values most his position of authority, his small following, and the favour of his chief.

The sanctions for his authority nowadays are mainly his popularity, together with the strength of kinship feeling, and the belief of the Bemba that it is dangerous to allow an older relative to die

[789] injured. His supernatural powers were a source of strength in the old days, but to a very small extent now, and it must be admitted that the forces which keep a village together are not very strong. It is a constant fear to a headman that his people will melt away.

622 (*b*) *The Chief*. The functions of the different types of chief

614 616 fashion, if the two are *banungwe*, but I never heard this done. A man can also tease his *munungwe's* wife and pretend to make indecent proposals to her. Lastly, *banungwe* may call down curses on each other with impunity (*kulapishya*, a very serious curse believed to be fatal as among ordinary people). This is done nowadays jokingly at the time of the new moon. Time after time I have heard the crescent moon greeted by shouting children tearing round the village calling the names of their *banungwe*, saying, 'Moon! Come and eat the people of 'such and such a clan!'[10] *Banungwe* are said to be able to take each other's possessions without let or hindrance in joke at the time of the new moon. If a man seizes an axe from the hut of a member of an opposite clan, the owner has to redeem it with 1*s.* or some small coin. Men pretend to raid the huts of their female *banungwe*, and particularly to snatch any objects, clothes, or cooking pots, that may be set to dry on the roofs.[11]

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[582] There seems also to be evidence that the *banungwe* relationship was originally associated with reciprocal marriage rights. An intelligent old chief told me, '*Banungwe* used to marry each 'other in the old days. It was specially good to 'do so. It was like the marriage of cross-'cousins.' Another elderly informant explained, 'The *Banungwe* are our wives because we knew 'each other a long while ago and because there 'is no in-law avoidance (*mako*) between us. We 'used to exchange each other in the old days.[12] 'That is why there is no *mako*. All those 'women (*i.e.*, the *banungwe*) are our wives.' The younger native does not give a retrospective explanation of this sort but merely laughs and says he can shout at his mother-in-law if he has married a *munungwe*. It does not matter what

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[10] The Bemba usually curse by Leza, the High God, or by the ancestral spirits of dead chiefs. I only heard cursing by the moon on such occasions.

[171]

[11] The available data shows us that the Bakaonde also tease members of their opposite clan (*e.g.*, birds and kaffir corn clans, etc.) whom they call *Bunungwe*, which Melland translates as 'tease or victim.' He mentions small gifts such as beads, honey, or beer given by the chaffed man to the joker. Melland, *op. cit.*, p. 252. The Lamba clans are paired in opposites known as *awalongo*, some pairs resembling the complementary clans of the Bemba, and Doke states that the opposition between two clans is to-day confined to jesting, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[12] For exchange he used the reciprocal form of *Kusalushya*—to exchange, *i.e.*, *Kusalushyana*—this word being used for marketing or bartering goods.

[p. 191(B)]

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A MODERN MOVEMENT OF WITCH-FINDERS

AUDREY I. RICHARDS

ALL over present-day Africa witch-finders seem to appear, as it were from nowhere, flourish for a time, and then disappear. Either it is some individual of unusual personality in his community who announces a magic remedy for human sufferings, and so obtains a following, or else it is a more or less organized band of wonder-workers which crosses the border from some neighbouring territory with all the kudos attached to the foreign and the strange. Among these latter the celebrated *Bamucapi*, who recently swept from Nyasaland into Northern Rhodesia and later reached Southern Rhodesia and the Congo, are an interesting example. The actual origin of this movement is difficult to discover, but I watched it at its height in the Bemba country of N.E. Rhodesia in the summer of 1934, and I want in this article to describe very shortly the methods of these witch-finders, and to try to account for their success.[1]

The *Bamucapi* themselves were for the most part young and dressed in European clothing. They went about the country in ones and twos, usually paying local assistants to help them. Their leader, they said, was one Kamwende of Mlanje in Nyasaland, but he was spoken of as a person of mythical attributes rather than as an organizer in actual control. The procedure of the witch-finders was impressive. Arrived at a village, they summoned the headman, who was bidden to gather his people together and to kill and cook a chicken for the ritual meal of which all were to partake. Once assembled the men and women were lined up in separate files, and passed one by one behind the back of the witch-finder, who caught their reflections in a small round mirror by a turn of his wrist. By his image in the glass it was claimed that a sorcerer could be immediately detected, and thus discovered, he was immediately called upon to yield up his horns (*nsengo*), a term which included all harmful magic charms. Wonderful stories were told of the perspicacity of the witch-finders. Horns wilfully concealed were

[1] During this time Professor Malinowski, then on a tour of inspection of his pupils' fields of study, visited my area, worked himself on this problem, and generously allowed me to add his notes to my own.

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apparently always unmasked. 'Look under the roof of his granary,' the *Bamucapi* would cry in case of a denial by the sorcerer, and there the hidden danger would be immediately brought to light. 'We know they made no mistakes', was the significant comment of natives, 'because the men and women they spotted as sorcerers were people we had been afraid of all along!'

But with the detection of the sorcerer a cure was provided. Each man and woman drank a sip of the famous *mucapi* medicine—a fine red powder which gave a soapy solution when shaken with water in a bottle—the name of the witch-finders being said to come from the Cinyanja word *kucapa*, to rub or wash clothes. For this medicine the claim of the *Bamucapi* was staggering. It was nothing less than the complete removal of witchcraft from the territory. A man who had drunk the *mucapi* medicine, and then returned to his evil practices, was liable to instant death—a grisly death in which he was to swell to enormous proportions, his limbs crinkled with dropsy, and his body too heavy to be carried to the grave. Nor could a cunning sorcerer escape by refusing to pass in front of the magic mirror. He would merely be caught at a kind of second coming of the founder of the movement, who was to return beating a mysterious drum outside each village at night. At its sound all witches and wizards as yet undetected would be compelled to follow to the graveyard where their crimes would be finally unmasked. Some told also of the coming of a mythical woman with one breast in front and one behind. The good she would suckle in front, while the wicked would find themselves following willynilly behind. Such stories were told and retold in the villages with the myth of the original Kamwende, who, it was said, had received his revelation in the grave from which he had been resurrected after two days, with one eye, one arm, and one leg powerless, but with the secret of the *mucapi* medicine and the power to resist poisons of all kinds.

As a secondary object the *Bamucapi* sold protective charms, pinches of powder sewn up in small cloth bags. For 3*d*. charms could be bought against wild beasts and snakes, for 6*d*. powder to protect the gardens from animal pests, for 6*d*. a charm for luck and success, and for 5*s*., it was rumoured, a charm for winning the favour of the local Government official. 'But you can see for yourself', my informant added, 'that very few natives have had as much money to spend as that!'

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The success of the movement was from the first overwhelming. It completely captured the people's imagination, and created its myths as it spread. From hut to hut of an evening men shouted the latest exploits of the witch-finders—the number of horns found in such and such a village, or the people miraculously saved from snakes or lions. The Government, which at first allowed the movement to proceed unchecked, was universally praised. 'This is the best thing the Bwanas have ever done for us,' many natives told me. 'Now at last they are allowing us to free our country from witchcraft.' Adverse criticism of missions which refused to allow their Christians to drink the medicine was frequent. The suspicion, and often the accusations of witchcraft commonly made against unpopular Christian teachers, seemed at last to be publicly substantiated. 'If they have nothing to fear,' the natives said, 'why are they afraid to put themselves to the test?' At the cross-roads outside each village was a pile of horns and other magic objects—horns which many missionaries had tried unsuccessfully for years to remove and forbid.

The cause of the success of this movement is therefore of considerable interest, the more so since it is in many ways typical of many such organizations of witch-finders which have sprung up in other parts of Africa. We have to ask ourselves first, then, why the methods of the *Bamucapi* appealed to the natives so strongly? To what fears did they seem to provide such an immediate and universal panacea? These are questions that cannot be answered by a study of the ritual and myths of the *Bamucapi* as an end in themselves. To assess the strength of the movement in any particular area we have to consider it against a background of tribal structure and belief.

In the Bemba country, for instance, it may be said that novelty was enough to account for the success of any native movement, religious or secular. The Babemba are known to be unusually credulous and unstable in temperament, the first to adopt and discard anything new. Nyasaland, the reputed home of the movement, has also a high reputation among Rhodesian natives as the land of high wages and educational facilities, and most of the clerks employed in the country are still of Nyasaland origin. Further, the Babemba are among those African peoples with whom every form of Europeanism is a positive cult. The *Bamucapi* appealed because they presented a dogma that

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satisfied native belief, while their ritual contained many superficial features of the white civilization. The witch-finders came as well-dressed young men, not as wrinkled old native doctors (*yanga*) in greasy bark-cloth. They worked in the open and lined up the natives after the manner of an official taking a census. They sold their medicine in stoppered chemist's bottles rather than in dirty old horns pulled from a skin bag. Their teaching, too, was an interesting blend of the old and the new. Their power, they said, came from Lesa, the High God on whom the *yanga* calls when preparing his medicine, the term being used by the missionary also to describe the Christian God. But curiously enough the efficacy of the medicine depended on the keeping of a number of taboos which are deeply embedded in native belief, such as, for instance, the taboo on a man having intercourse with a woman in the bush. Some natives said that Marya also helped the *Bamucapi*, but added quickly not the Marya of the Catholic missions, but another one; for there is no doubt the movement was anti-mission as a whole. Phrases reminiscent of Christian teaching were also used. The witch-finders addressed the villagers with a preliminary sermon, a technique quite foreign to the native *yanga*, and stressed such ideas as the washing of sins. Kamwende, it will be remembered, descended into the grave and rose again, and was expected to reappear at a second coming. It is interesting, too, that the *Bamucapi* followed the distinctions made by the Roman Catholic missions in the classification of native medicines. Those that contained medicine (*muti*) only were permitted, but those that contained what the Babemba call a *cisimba*, an activating principle, such as an eagle's claw or the bone of a squirrel, were to be forbidden.

But over and above the attraction of novelty there were deeper causes behind the success of the *Bamucapi*. The witch-finders claimed, as I stated, to remove the dangerous weapons of the sorcerer. We have to ask ourselves then, whether the fear of witchcraft is one which dominates native belief. Is black magic, in the sense of a definite ritual actually performed by a man in the belief that it will harm his enemy, very constantly performed among the Babemba?

An analysis of the horns collected by the *Bamucapi* throws an interesting light on this question. I took possession in one instance of the complete heap of horns and magic charms, 139 in all, which had been

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781 found in a village of some 70 huts. These lay in a tumbled heap at the cross-roads outside the village, surrounded by knots of people, mostly young men and women, murmuring under their breath at the horrors from which they had been saved. These onlookers seemed to assume to a man that the horns were dangerous objects without exception. Excited comment identified this and that small object as coming from a dead man's grave, as almost certainly part of the bone of a sorcerer's victim, or as soaked in the blood of a dead child.

781 415 The actual analysis of these horns was therefore interesting. The collection included 45 small duiker horns, admitted by most to be used as containers for charms or medicines (*muti*) usually of a harmless type such as hunting magic. Sixteen were the horns of big buck such as roan antelope, the usual containers for medicine good and bad, and even for snuff or any other substance which needs to be carried in a stoppered vessel. It would be difficult, informants admitted, to tell a container of black magic from a simple box of snuff. Of the rest of the charms, 17 were small gourds (*misafi*) used as containers for snuff or oil with a wooden stopper fixed in the narrow end. In such tiny gourds, magic of good luck or popularity is often carried (*muti na cisense*). Thirty-six more charms were the small cloth bags (*mikoba*) in which medicines of various sorts are sewn to be worn round the owner's neck, the *Bamucapi* themselves supplying their medicine in this form. Such medicines would be nearly always protective to the owner and not destructive to somebody else. To cut a long story short then, out of a collection of 135 horns which had drawn cries of horror and execration from the passers-by, 125 were mere containers, possibly filled with nothing more than the ordinary household remedies which the English mother keeps against coughs and digestive ailments.

789 [825] Of the remainder of the horns, some were admittedly doubtful or definitely suspicious. Five were wristlets made of the skin of the water lizard or the tree iguana, which are considered ill-omened animals. [784] Nine were bush-buck horns, and this buck (*cisongo*) has a very bad reputation among the Babemba. The animal is believed to be a *cibanda* or evil spirit, and is tabooed to chiefs, to pregnant women, and 754 789 others. By such a horn a sorcerer would be able to lay the spirit of his victim, sending it flying through the air by night 'glowing like a white man's torch' (*lulebanga torchi*) to the grave of the recently buried

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man, where it would be found sticking upright on the mound in the morning full of grave-earth, and hence the injured spirit of the dead.

Some of the other objects the natives condemned in spite of all evidence of common sense, so much had they made up their minds already as to the horrors they expected to find. The parietal bone of a monkey recently shot in a garden raid was sworn to be that of a baby. The skull of a vulture with its characteristic beak was identified as an owl by natives who are good naturalists, since sorcerers are known to prowl at night with owl-like birds (*ntitimusi*) to steal grain from the granaries of others. A polished bit of wood was dubbed the wrist-bone of a lion by one of the best-known hunters in the district. Lastly, the two horns which raised the greatest outcry were *fimango*, or horns specially prepared by the *nganga* of a chief in old days to lay the spirits of sorcerers burnt after death by the *mwafi* poison ordeal; that is to say, horns which are specially made to protect people against witchcraft. These objects, filled with medicines to attract evil spirits, the ends netted in and covered with red dyé and black beads for the same purpose, acted, as it were, as lightning conductors, kept outside a chief's village to attract the evil spirits to the ground. *Fimango* were also used in the most important form of divination known as '*kutinta*' practised by the *nganga* of the chief. The main protection of the native against witchcraft in the old days was therefore cheerfully discarded on the heap at the bidding of a couple of quacks! In fact the *Bamucapi* depended a good deal for their effects on the ignorance of the young of the use of Bemba magic. Their own ignorance on the subject, and their lack of knowledge of the language, was of no account, since they defended the throwing away of a charm admittedly harmless by declaring it contained a *cisimba* unseen to the ordinary man.

Our examination of a typical heap of horns has therefore shown us that only 11 out of 135 horns were admitted by every one to be undeniably bad destructive magic, that is to say, prepared for the injury of others. For the rest, 2 were actually protective magic intended to save the whole community against witchcraft, while the majority were containers of medicine, some curative, and some mere charms for success, dangerous only in so far as success could be considered to be obtained at the expense of others. It would appear thus to be part of the skill of the *Bamucapi* to create the sense of danger from which they

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professed to save the people so miraculously. That is to say, they drew out the maximum number of charms from a village by convincing each owner that detection was inevitable, either now or in a mythical future, and that even harmless charms were better out of the way. Besides, never was immunity against the charge of witchcraft secured with such ease—a penny a time and 'they give you change'! Old people who had at one time or another been accused of witchcraft, walked miles in search of the *Bamucapi* in order to drink the medicine, and so be publicly passed as free from suspicion. The pile of horns at the cross-roads naturally grew, and its very height proved to the rest of the world the dangers from which it had been saved.

Are we then to believe that the sorcerer proper does not exist among the Babemba; or does he exist only, as Evans-Pritchard suggests may be the case, among the Azande, not in fact, but in native opinion?[1] We know that primitive peoples are alike in their almost universal belief that death and disaster are due to supernatural agencies. They differ, on the other hand, greatly as to the proportion of human ills which they attribute to hostile fellow beings with supernatural powers, and that which they believe to be inflicted by supernatural beings, angry spirits and the like, themselves.

Some communities, that is to say, are more witch-ridden than others. The Trobriand islander, Malinowski tells us, considers 'every death, without exception, as an act of sorcery'.[2] Similarly, a neighbouring Melanesian people, the Dobu islanders, believe 'that all good luck is due to one's ritual being stronger than the ritual of others, which is aimed at results contrary to one's own aims'.[3] Of the Babemba this is emphatically not so. They believe good and bad fortune to be due to a variety of causes of which witchcraft is only one.

The place of the sorcerer in the community also varies tremendously. In some cases he practises his art, as Malinowski says, 'almost openly',[4] the magic of healing and the magic of destruction being vested in one practitioner, who acts in the interests of the man who employs him. In such a community 'there can be no doubt that acts of sorcery are

[1] Evans-Pritchard, 'Sorcery in Native Opinion', *Africa*, vol. vi, no. 1.
[2] Malinowski, *Sexual Life of Savages*, Routledge, London, 1929, p. 137.
[3] Fortune, *Sorcerers of Dobu*, Routledge, London, 1932, p. 101.
[4] Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, Routledge, London, 1922, p. 75.

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753 feature. Punishment is only inflicted by the supernatural power when it is deserved. The religious dogma follows strictly the tribal morality 769 and gives it its sanction. It stresses particularly that basic sentiment of 626 Bemba society—the attitude of a man to authority in general and in particular to his chief. *Mipaſi* are injured if not given proper respect, while the whole land suffers if the chief defaults. So also in the case of the avenging *ciwa*, it is the failure to honour and stand by your relations which is punished, the typical case always given being that of the old mother who dies of starvation and neglect. Here again the *ciwa* [776] may not even return and haunt the living without the permission of Lesa, the High-God, and only a spirit suffering under a legitimate grievance is allowed to avenge. The curse by the name of a dead chief will only light on the real offender.

626 To sum up, according to Bemba dogma most misfortune is believed to be due to wrong-doing, and in particular transgression of the rules 787 of respect to authority. The cause of the disaster can be ascertained by divination, itself a mechanism socially approved and carried out by a reputable character, the *ganga*. The remedy can be procured by the purchase of medicine, by the performance of a laborious rite, and perhaps, most important of all, by the public admission of guilt.

754 In this apparently logical and orderly system there is, according to theory, only one incalculable element—the sorcerer (*muloſi*) who kills without rhyme or reason, for the sake of doing harm. The *baloſi* are enemies of society and running counter to its laws. They actually start their careers of crime by committing some outrageous act, such as father-daughter incest, or the murder of a baby of their own clan. They have various mythical attributes. They can make themselves invisible; kill at a distance; send magic birds to steal food from their enemies; and of course perform secret rites and possess and sell evil [828] medicines. Now it is obvious that such sorcerers are actually non-existent, though their mythical attributes are readily credited to unpopular people of dour or difficult temperaments, bad mixers in the American sense, bad sharers, or persons who seem to be winning 754 unusual success at others' expense. I would not be bold enough to say ● 789 that no rites of evil magic are performed in Bemba country, or that 578 there do not exist here and there individuals who believe themselves to possess such powers. But it is the reflection of the *buloſi* belief in

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the widespread use of protective magic which is, I believe, the important practical issue. In an atmosphere of suspicion and hatred, natives will believe themselves forced to buy charms from the reputable *ganga* of the neighbourhood, or very commonly from a witch-doctor of another tribe, to protect themselves (*kufilika mubili*), such charms being naturally viewed with alarm by others. In such an atmosphere of mistrust, too, ordinary magic of success, hunting, and agricultural charms, or those for luck in personal relations, such as formed the bulk of the horns on our heap, assume a sinister aspect. Beauty magic bought by a young unmarried girl is not a dangerous possession, but the same charm purchased by one of two jealous co-wives would be considered a hostile act. All magic of luck and self-protection becomes dangerous, that is to say, just in so far as the success it brings is believed to hurt another. Protective magic, like protective armaments, increases the sense of insecurity it was bought to end. Herein lies the danger, especially as contact with white civilization has, in many cases, actually increased the use of such charms and counter-charms.

A little consideration will in fact show us, what is not at first sight evident, that a change in the native belief in sorcery inevitably follows changes in social structure. The strength of the fear of witchcraft in any community obviously depends on the nature of its tribal institutions.

It is clear that the strength of the belief in the power of sorcery in any community depends on the nature of its tribal institutions and, in particular, the type of authority exercised, and its legal machinery. Its incidence will vary with its system of social grouping, local or kinship, and the absence or presence of emotional tension between these groups. To explain by a contrast between two widely different cultures, the Trobriand Islander is afraid his chief may bewitch him, and hence magic acts in this community as a conservative force backing up his authority. Witchcraft has its appointed place in the whole political system. The Mubemba, living under a far more autocratic and powerful chief, says simply, 'Why should a chief bewitch a commoner since he can so easily beat him or mutilate him?' Evans-Pritchard, in fact, suggests that we shall find an interesting correlation between the morphology of magic and the type of political system in a primitive society.[1]

[1] Evans-Pritchard, 'The Morphology and Function of Magic', *American Anthropologist*, Oct. 1929.

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754 Kasama. In the mines it is the tribal admixture which is, I believe, at
182 the basis of the natives' positive obsession by the fear of witchcraft.
121 Each tribe credits the other with absolutely diabolical powers.
171 Paralysed by the fear of the unknown, what can they do but buy more charms? Moreover, wage-earning in a large industrial undertaking provides opportunity for advance through individual initiative, and hence jealousy is rife. I know few successful clerks raised above the heads of their fellows who have not been accused at one time or another of sorcery. 'How else did he gain the bwana's favour?' is the natural question. And it is in the ranks of such men that, paradoxically enough, the most money is spent in the purchase of protective charms. I know of one ex-Government clerk in the Kasama area who had spent a Government bonus of £15 on the purchase of protective magic from a neighbouring tribe. Jealousy of the man who has adapted himself more quickly than his fellows to Europeanism is, I believe, inevitable in this transition stage.

791 Here, then, we must leave our study of the *Bamucapi* movement. We
121 have seen that part of the success of these charlatans was due to their
754 clever blend of the old and the new, and I believe that such a combination will be almost invariably found in modern witch-finder movements. Added to this we must reckon the cleverness of a technique
789 that drew from a village its harmless as well as its dangerous horns, and by the multiplicity of charms thus produced increased the sense of the risk the whole community had run. An analysis of the horns collected led us to doubt the existence of sorcerers proper in the community, a doubt confirmed by a study of Bemba belief as to the supernatural causes of death and disaster. But native belief in witchcraft, and the widespread use of protective magic and counter-charms of all kinds, was confirmed. This latter I believe to have been actually increased by contact with the white civilization, and the resultant economic and social changes in Northern Rhodesia. Hence follows the success of modern movements of witch-finders, movements which are, I believe, inevitable as a product of violent changes in tribal organization and belief.

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